



Connecticut Chapter

Testimony by Chris Syrek, President of  
Associated Builders & Contractors

Before the Labor and Public Employees Committee on February 16, 2017

---

Good afternoon Co-Chairs Miner, Gomes, Porter, and members of the Committee. My name is Chris Syrek; I am the President of Associated Builders and Contractors of Connecticut (CT ABC). CT ABC is a statewide trade association of over 200 members that represents merit shop contractors.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of our members on two bills before this Committee this afternoon.

### **SB 747 AAC Prohibiting on Call Shift Scheduling**

CT ABC would like to voice its concerns with the section of this proposed bill that requires at least a 24 hour notice if the employee is not needed to work a scheduled shift. The construction industry by nature has unpredictable schedules that can often change by the hour. While abrupt changes to work schedules within 24 hours in the industry are not always common, there are certainly many instances that are out of the employer's control.

A prime example would be changes in work schedules due to weather. Many construction trades operate outside and work has to be postponed or modified due to weather. Another example would be an incident where one particular trade was not able to start their work until a separate trade finished theirs. A day's worth of delay and a change in a scheduled work day could easily occur in this situation.

While the intent of this bill is certainly noble, CT ABC would encourage members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee to consider the realities that business owners in certain industries such as construction face in these situations.

### **HB 5590 AAC Creating a Task Force to Improve the Workforce Development System in the State of Connecticut**

Workforce Development, training, and creating jobs for the future that meet the needs of our many employers is important to every industry. I would like to speak to the construction industry specifically and some of the challenges that contractors are facing. During the 2008 recession a large number of skilled construction craftsmen left the industry due to layoffs and lack of work. As the economy both nationally and here in Connecticut has improved, the construction industry has improved and construction spending has risen. This has allowed for most construction companies to increase their hiring.

However, the industry is now facing a new problem in the extreme workforce shortage that looks to be getting worse before it gets better. Many skilled workers who left the industry in 2008 have never come back and the industry as a whole is aging and seeing significant amounts of retirements. It is estimated that by 2022 the construction industry nationwide will be facing a workforce shortage of 1.6 million workers.

CT ABC is committed to doing our part to help develop and train the next generation of skilled workers and fix this problem. Our partner in training, the Construction Education Center, has almost 100 enrolled apprentices and also offers courses in safety, continuing education and professional development. It is also our belief that the State of Connecticut could assist in promoting workforce development by supporting the Technical High Schools, changing the apprentice hiring ratios for the licensed trades, and extending the apprenticeship tax credit to S Corps.

We would welcome the opportunity to be a part of this task force and to work together to improve the workforce development system in our state.